

DEPARTMENT OF CHILDREN AND FAMILIES  
DIVISION OF EARLY CARE AND EDUCATION  
ADMINISTRATOR'S MEMO SERIES

\_\_\_\_\_ ACTION  
\_\_\_\_\_ NOTICE DECE 12-

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DISPOSAL DATE: NONE

**To:** County Human Service Directors  
Tribal Directors  
Certifying Agencies

**From:** Elaine Richmond  
Division of Early Care and Education  
Division Administrator

**Re:** Certification Review Process

## PURPOSE

This memo describes the process to review county, tribal and contracted programs for certification of child care providers. The Certification Review process is a joint effort between the Bureau of Regional Operations (BRO) and the Bureau of Early Care Regulation (BECR) to monitor certifying agencies for compliance with certification requirements and provide technical assistance to agencies to ensure the safety of children and support quality child care services by certified providers.

The following aspects of certification practice are included in the Certification Review process:

- Determinations, policies and procedures for certification and monitoring of child care providers are made effectively by certifying agencies;
- Agencies are in compliance with statutes and administrative code intended to protect the health and safety of children; and
- Agencies are meeting the requirements of the DCF Administration of Child Care Programs Contract.

## BACKGROUND

The Department of Children and Families directly regulates licensed family and group child care facilities and administers Wisconsin Shares, the child care subsidy program for low-income working families and participants in the W-2 program. In addition, DCF contracts with county and tribal agencies for the regulation of certified child care facilities to receive Wisconsin Shares reimbursement.

In 2009, the Legislative Audit Bureau (LAB) evaluated child care regulation in licensed and certified facilities and the potential for fraud and abuse under Wisconsin Shares. The LAB report included several recommendations for improvements of certification practice including, but not limited to:

- timeliness of site visits;
- documentation of attempted visits;
- identification of violations;
- documentation of violations in database;
- timeliness of background checks;
- sanctioning of programs with large numbers and/or severe violations.

## **REVIEW PROCESS**

The review process includes the following elements:

- Review of certification activity documentation by looking at a sample of provider records in the WISCCRS system and on-site at the agency, including open records for currently certified providers and closed records.
- Orientation and training activities to assist providers in becoming certified and meet ongoing training requirements.
- Completion of caregiver background checks for providers and review of data matches sent to the certifying agencies.
- Completion of new worker training by certification workers.
- Review of provider complaints and denial, revocation or suspension actions taken against providers.
- Interviews with agency staff.

Certifying agencies will be reviewed on a periodic basis every few years, with the reviews scheduled by BRO child care coordinators at the agency's convenience. The BRO child care coordinator will work with the agency to conduct the various elements of the review process. Upon completion of the review, the agency will receive a written report with the results of the review. In the event that improvements are necessary, the BRO child care coordinator will work with the agency to develop an Action Plan to address review findings and recommendations. Action Plans will be reviewed by the BECR certification specialist. If a serious problem is identified the agency may be directed to take corrective action. The BRO child care coordinator will provide consultation and technical assistance to agencies as they develop and implement their Action Plans and any Corrective Actions.

Several tools have been developed for the review process, including Certification Review Checklist, Agency Interview, Operator Records Review Form, Caregiver Screening Summary, Findings Summary and Action Plan. These tools are attached to this memo and can be used by agencies to conduct local quality assurance and prepare for Certification Reviews. These review tools were piloted by BRO through informal reviews conducted with agencies in 2011.

Review findings will be used to:

- Identify and analyze discrepancies in agency interpretation and implementation of statutes and administrative rules;

- Support agencies to comply with statutes and administrative rules by providing training and technical assistance on the areas of non-compliance;
- Inform revisions or development of future policy/procedure manuals and certification training materials.

## **ANNUAL VISITS**

In addition to the full Certification Reviews every few years, BRO child care coordinators will also make annual on-site visits to agencies to check with agencies on their certification programs, including follow-up on previous Certification Reviews, trends in certification activities as documented in WISCRRS and agency training and technical assistance needs.

## **ACTION SUMMARY STATEMENT**

The BRO will begin conducting Certification Reviews of certifying agencies in 2012. The reviews will result in reports to agencies with findings and recommendations and a requirement to develop Action Plans or Corrective Actions as necessary. BRO staff will also make annual visits to agencies in the years between reviews.

BRO child care coordinators will contact agency certification staff to schedule Certification Reviews and agency visits. In the meantime, agencies are encouraged to review the protocol outlining the review process and contact their BRO child care coordinator if they have questions.

## **CONTACTS**

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*Note: BRO is hiring the child care coordinator for the Southeastern Region by February, so county assignments will change.*

DCF Central Office

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Attachments:

Administrative review checklist  
Administrative agency interview  
Caregiver screening summary  
Individual operator records review